



MAGIC VALLEY

BLAINE, CAMAS, CASSIA, GOODING, JEROME, LINCOLN, MINIDOKA, & TWIN FALLS COUNTIES

LABOR FORCE & EMPLOYMENT

As shown in Magic Valley Table 1, the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for April 2001 was 4.1 percent, which was four-tenths of a percentage point higher than March 2001, but was four-tenths of a percentage point lower than April 2000. April 2001 was higher than March 2001 because there was a lot of caution in retail spring hiring due to perceived slipping in consumer spending. Overall, however, unemployment is better than a year previously with some new job creation in the fast food and restaurant sectors.

Specifically, sectors that have shown growth over the last year were *Manufacturing-Food Processing* with a 3.0 percent increase from April 2000 to April 2001. *Transportation, Communications, & Utilities, Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate, and Services* rose 3.5 percent, 2.8 percent, and 1.4 percent respectively. The sectors that have shown the most notable decreases over the past year were *Retail Trade, Wholesale Trade, and Manufacturing-Durable Goods*, with drops of 6.8 percent, 2.2 percent, and 6.9 percent respectively.

Overall, *Nonfarm Payroll Jobs* were down five-tenths of a percentage point from April 2000 to April 2001. The South Central Idaho area has avoided the large layoffs and shutdowns announced in other parts of the state, but there are signs of economic cooling and increased caution in hiring. While the business climate remains optimistic for job seekers, the largest increases in job creation have been in sectors that typically have lower wages. The weakened state of the agricultural economy continues to exert a great deal of influence over the general economic well-being of the area, and with the present national economic downturn also affecting South Central Idaho, especially in consumer confidence, it is safe to assume that some small increases in unemployment may be possible throughout 2001.

Magic Valley Table 1: Labor Force & Employment
Twin Falls, Jerome, and Gooding counties

	Apr 2001*	Mar 2001	Apr 2000	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
Seasonally Adjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	48,320	48,580	47,380	-0.5	2.0
Unemployment	1,960	1,810	2,130	8.3	-8.0
% of Labor Force Unemployed	4.1%	3.7%	4.5%		
Total Employment	46,360	46,770	45,250	-0.9	2.5
Unadjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	47,320	46,930	46,390	0.8	2.0
Unemployment	1,830	2,070	1,990	-11.6	-8.0
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.9%	4.4%	4.3%		
Total Employment	45,490	44,860	44,400	1.4	2.5
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**	37,070	36,840	37,270	0.6	-0.5
Goods-Producing Industries	6,950	6,800	6,940	2.2	0.1
Mining & Construction	1,970	1,860	1,990	5.9	-1.0
Manufacturing	4,980	4,940	4,950	0.8	0.6
Durable Goods	810	810	870	0.0	-6.9
Nondurable Goods	4,170	4,130	4,080	1.0	2.2
Food Processing	3,130	3,120	3,040	0.3	3.0
All Other Nondurable Goods	1,040	1,010	1,040	3.0	0.0
Service-Producing Industries	30,120	30,040	30,330	0.3	-0.7
Transportation, Comm., & Utilities	2,920	2,950	2,820	-1.0	3.5
Wholesale Trade	2,260	2,280	2,310	-0.9	-2.2
Retail Trade	7,480	7,340	8,030	1.9	-6.8
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	1,460	1,450	1,420	0.7	2.8
Services	8,480	8,510	8,360	-0.4	1.4
Government Administration	3,680	3,650	3,580	0.8	2.8
Government Education	3,840	3,860	3,810	-0.5	0.8

*Preliminary Estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

Twin Falls County

- The College of Southern Idaho announced the hiring of Jan W. Rogers as the first executive director of the newly formed Southern Idaho Economic Development Organization (SIEDO), effective June 1, 2001. Rogers was previously the marketing director for the *Times-News* of Twin Falls and was selected from a pool of more than 30 applicants from across the nation. She has more than 25 years' experience in marketing and management in the Magic Valley and Texas. The Southern Idaho Economic Development Organization was formed in December 2000 upon the recommendation of the Lockwood-Greene Study, a comprehensive marketing analysis that was completed in mid-2000. SIEDO was formed when a regional coalition of public- and private-

sector leaders from Twin Falls and Jerome met to formalize efforts to attract new employers and to help existing businesses expand. Jan Rogers will officially be an employee of CSI, and the college will pay most of her \$60,000 per-year salary. All other costs associated with her position will be paid by SIEDO. She will work from CSI's Work Keys Development Center on South Lincoln Street in Jerome.

- Joslin Field, Magic Valley Regional Airport has hired a new manager. Bill Carberry, previously an operations specialist for Centennial Airport of Englewood, Colorado, began work as the new manager of Joslin Field, Magic Valley Regional Airport on May 7, 2001.
- The City of Buhl has been awarded a \$400,000 Community Development Block Grant from the Idaho Department of Commerce to be used to fund downtown revitalization in the city. The downtown enhancement project is scheduled for construction in 2002 and involves the heart of downtown Buhl, running for two blocks in all four directions of the Main Street and Broadway intersections. It will include street resurfacing and repairs on Main and Broadway, a new left turn lane on Main, new sidewalk and curb extenders, new curbs and gutters, intersection safety lighting, benches, trash receptacles, decorative street lighting, trees, a new traffic signal, and a storm drainage system. The total cost of the project is estimated at \$2 million and will be shared by the City of Buhl, an Idaho Transportation Department Local Improvement District, and the Idaho Department of Commerce.
- The Advanced Regional Technical Education Coalition (ARTEC) received a \$40,000 contribution from the Twin Falls Chamber of Commerce's Business Plus II for 2001-2002 operating expenses. ARTEC administers a system of eighteen training academies throughout South Central Idaho school districts to help train students in many different vocational occupations. Now in its third year, Business Plus II is a campaign sponsored by the Twin Falls Chamber of Commerce to raise \$1.6 million from local businesses for economic development purposes.
- The Kimberly School District is preparing for its move into the new \$5.5 million high school and gymnasium. Completion of the facility is expected by July 16, 2001. Maintenance crews and teachers will soon begin moving into the new classrooms, leaving the old high school round building to be converted into space for the fourth and fifth grades. All offices will be moved, except the elementary school office. The present high school annex will be

dismantled at a later date.

Jerome, Gooding, Blaine, Lincoln, and Camas Counties

- Wendell School District voters approved a 20-year \$4.6 million plant levy that will finance construction of a new 56,000-square-foot middle school and separate 3,000-square-foot vocational-technical building. Approval of the levy also secured a \$1.5 million state Safe School plant facilities grant that will be used to pay interest on the levy amount. The levy was approved by 72 percent of the vote.
- Lincoln County is exploring the possibility of applying to the Idaho Department of Commerce for a grant to fund an economic development specialist to help promote the county and secure new employers and expand existing business in the area.

Cassia and Minidoka Counties

- Minidoka County School District voters approved a \$10.3 million plant facilities levy. The levy will finance extensive remodeling and equipment upgrades for several district schools, although the majority of the money will finance improvements at Minico High School. Residents won't see a tax increase because the district retired a 20-year bond issue in February. A 33-member advisory council that included citizens, business owners, and farmers proposed the levy amount.
- The Heyburn City Council voted unanimously to annex 32 acres that include the J.R. Simplot Heyburn Plant. The council had been considering this action for several months, but had held off action while the city and Simplot officials negotiated electrical service. The Simplot Co. has filed litigation against the city and negotiations have broken off. Simplot alleges that the city's electrical rates are unreasonable, while the city says that Simplot is only paying residential rates and that rates are fair. The litigation was to be considered by the 5th District Court on June 11, 2001.

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